

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 05122 311113Z
ACTION NODS-00

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S E C R E T DAMASCUS 05122

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

EO 11652: XGDS-1, 2
TAGS: MOPS, PEPR, IS, LE, SY
SUBJECT: LEBANON PROBLEM

REFERENCE: STATE 221463

1. PURSUANT TO REFERENCED INSTRUCTIONS, I CALLED ON MOHAMMED DABBOUL, PRESIDENT AL-ASSAD'S PRIVATE SECRETARY, TO CONVEY THE SECRETARY'S ORAL MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT ASSAD. I PROPOSED TO DABBOUL THAT WE EITHER GO THROUGH THE WHOLE ENGLISH TEXT OF THE MESSAGE, TRANSLATING INTO ARABIC AS WE WENT ALONG, OR, ALTERNATIVELY, THAT I GIVE HIM AN ORAL SUMMARY IN ARABIC AND THEN HE COULD HAVE IT TRANSLATED BY HIS OWN INTERPRETER. DABBOUL SAID HE PREFERRED THE LATTER COURSE SINCE IMMEDIATELY AFTER MY DEPARTURE HE WOULD HAVE THE FULL TEXT TRANSLATED INTO ARABIC.

2. ACCORDINGLY, I GAVE HIM A COMPLETE RESUME OF THE MESSAGE, TOUCHING ON EVERY POINT AND EMPHASIZING OUR PROPOSAL THAT A MORE LASTING CEASEFIRE BE IMMEDIATELY DECLARED, PERMITTING A BREATHING SPELL DURING WHICH RENEWED NEGOTIATIONS COULD BE INITIATED WITH A VIEW TO RESOLVING LEBANON'S BASIC PROBLEMS. IN THIS CONNECTION, SYRIAN FORCES SHOULD MOVE NO FURTHER FROM
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THEIR CURRENT POSITIONS, PARTICULARLY IN NORTH LEBANON. I STRESSED VERY HARD THE CHARGED ATMOSPHERE IN ISRAEL FLOWING FROM ISRAEL'S MISINTERPRETATIONS OF SYRIAN ACTIONS IN LEBANON, MISINTERPRETATIONS THAT COULD LEAD TO DISASTROUS MISCALCULATIONS.

3. HAVING JUST LEARNED THAT PRESIDENT ASSAD IS RETURNING

TO DAMASCUS TODAY, I URGED DABBOUL TO DO ALL HE COULD TO ARRANGE A MEETING FOR ME WITH HIM. I SAID THAT WHILE I HAD NOT PRESENTED MY CREDENTIALS, THE MATTER UNDER DISCUSSION IS OF SUFFICIENT URGENCY TO JUSTIFY AN EARLY MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT. WE SHOULD NOT ALLOW PROTOCOL TO INTERFERE WITH MATTERS OF GREAT IMPORT. DABBOUL AGREED WITH THE LAST POINT AND SAID HE WOULD TRY TO ARRANGE SUCH A MEETING. HE NOTED THAT COMMENCING TOMORROW THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE IN EFFECT SHUT DOWN FOR SIX DAYS OWING TO THE ID HOLIDAYS (COMBINED WITH LIBYAN INDEPENDENCE DAY). IN THIS CASE, I COMMENTED, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR ME TO SEE THE PRESIDENT THIS EVENING.

4. MEANWHILE, I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT LATER TODAY TO SEE ABDUL KARIM ADI, MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WITH WHOM I WILL GO OVER THE POINTS I COVERED YESTERDAY WITH ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER QADDUR, INCLUDING SYRIAN UNDERTAKINGS RE WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS FROM LEBANON, AS WELL AS DISCUSSING WITH HIM THE NATURE OF OUR CONCERNS AS CONTAINED IN THE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE TO ASSAD.

5. COMMENT: UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDS OTHERWISE, SHOULD I BE LUCKY ENOUGH TO SEE PRESIDENT ASSAD THIS EVENING I WOULD PROPOSE ALSO DELIVERING TO HIM THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (STATE 211479). WHILE THIS MESSAGE DOES NOT ADDRESS OUR CURRENT CONCERNS, ITS CONTENTS
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REMAIN VALID. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S IMMEDIATE VIEWS. RECOGNIZING THAT THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE HAS LESS SENSE OF URGENCY, I WOULD INFORM ASSAD THAT THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE HAD BEEN PREPARED BEFORE RECENT EVENTS IN LEBANON IN THE EXPECTATION THAT I WOULD BE SEEING HIM AT THAT TIME.

6. SUGGEST DEPARTMENT PASS TO AMMAN, CAIRO, JERUSALEM, JIDDA, TEL AVIV, USMISSION USUN NEW YORK. SEELYE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ADDEES PARA. 6.

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NNN

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